

Inquiries

Low-Income Energy Assistance Grant (Request for Proposal dated October 1, 2012)

- Q. Can agencies that are new to providing energy assistance apply?**
- A. Non-profit or public organizations are eligible to apply. Preference will be given to organizations that have an existing administrative structure for providing energy assistance to low-income clients, that can handle additional distribution activities.
- Q. Would the Michigan Public Service Commission entertain a proposal that would help low-income households address not only utility shut offs, but food, health care, housing, transportation, etc., as all these challenges add up to on-going poverty conditions?**
- A. Proposals submitted by eligible applicants will be reviewed and scored based on the Selection Criteria contained in Part VI of the Request for Proposal. Proposals that offer multiple services to low-income households will be considered, however, only the portion of the program that addresses and provides energy assistance for low-income households will be funded.
- Q. The RFP states that a copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statement be included, does this count against the page limits of the proposal?**
- A. Pursuant to Section V-F of the RFP, only applicants selected to receive a grant must provide an audited financial statement.
- Q. Would installing solar panels at a low-income housing project be a valid proposal for this grant? The idea is that by having the low-income housing project produce its own electricity all of the residents' electric bills would be lower.**
- A. The project described would not qualify under the RFP. The intent is to pay heating bills and prevent shut offs for low-income households.
- Q. Do *weatherization services* qualify as "preventative programs to reduce the number of customers experiencing energy shut-off" as described in the RFP? Will proposals for weatherization be considered for this grant?**
- A. Weatherization services qualify as preventative programs to reduce the number of customers experiencing energy shut-offs; however, the intent of the RFP is to provide low-income households assistance with payment of heating bills. Proposals to provide weatherization services will not be considered.

Q. Under contractual services the RFP requires a written approval to make a sole source selection when a competitive selection is not feasible. When do applicants make a formal request to make a sole source selection?

A. Applicants should include a detailed explanation in the proposal and in the budget narrative why a competitive selection is not feasible.

Q. Can computer equipment be included in an applicant's proposed budget?

A. Computer equipment can be included in the proposed budget. The request to purchase computer equipment must be reasonable and the budget narrative must include a detailed explanation of each item's purpose, who within the organization will use the equipment, and how it relates to the project to be funded. If the applicant is a past recipient of Low-Income Energy Assistance (LIEA) grant funds, information on the past purchase of computer equipment using grant funds should be included.

Q. Is a DHS (SER) decision notice required?

A. A DHS decision notice is not required, but if a client has been prescreened by DHS and has a decision letter, a copy should be kept in the selected applicant's file.

Q. Are low-income customers required to have a shut off notice to be eligible for assistance?

A. A shut off notice is not required.

Q. On page 28 of the RFP, number 5 states "Has the client received energy assistance services from the agency (grantee) in the past? How far back should agencies go when providing data; is 12 months sufficient?"

A. Twelve months is sufficient, however, selected applicants will not be required to report this information to the issuing office. If selected to receive a grant, the agency should include this information on the "Applicant Questionnaire" and retain the information in the agency's files.

Q. Where can an organization obtain a copy of the 2012-2013 federal poverty level guidelines?

A. The 2012-2013 federal poverty level guidelines are available on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website at:
<http://www.liheap.ncat.org/profiles/povertytables/FY2013/popstate.htm>

Q. Could you provide guidance on Section II-O of the RFP “No State Employees or Legislators”?

- A. Section II-O of the RFP is used to prevent any legislator or state employee from receiving benefits of grants being awarded to entities. The grant process should not enable an entity to receive funds who may in turn be directly affiliated with these parties. State employees qualify for energy assistance if they meet all eligibility requirements.

Q. What is Michigan Public Service Commission’s proportional share of indirect costs?

- A. Total administrative costs included in the budget may not exceed 10% of the total grant award. Administrative costs include personnel; supplies, materials and equipment; contractual services; travel; other expenses and **indirect costs**. Direct assistance must total at least 90% of the total grant award. Section V-H(9) of the RFP provides a definition of indirect costs as it relates to this grant.